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POINTS OF AGREEMENT AMONG SOCIOLOGISTS

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When the secretary asked me to read a paper at this meeting, my answer was that I would start an informal discussion, but that the one thing needful to make such conventions as this a success was the banishment of "papers" altogether. Then, like thousands before me, I followed the line of least resistance, and before I had stopped jotting down the points which I should like to expand, I had scheduled twenty propositions, with somewhat extended comments. They amount to a rather cogent piece of evidence that my creed was better than my practice.

If I had anticipated what occurred last evening, I should have added another ingredient to my prescription for a successful meeting—viz., the abolition of presidents who put into their inaugural addresses all that can be said by the subsequent speakers. Professor Ward last evening covered the ground so completely that what I have to offer is already out of date. The only criticism I could pass on his address, if I wanted to pick a quarrel with him, is the exact opposite of the most obvious fault with the remarks I shall make. I thought he claimed a little too much for sociology up to date, while I shall claim much less than the facts bear out. I shall not attempt to sum up all the points on which sociologists agree. I shall not venture at all into statements of social principles. The twenty propositions which I shall recite, with such comments as time permits, might indeed be compressed into the apparently trite observation that *the sociologists are fairly well agreed about their point of view*. Anyone who has looked below the surface of the history of science knows that when a group of scientists have gone so far they have potentially solved their major problems. Whatever else sociology is, we all see that it is important first of all simply as a point of view. We have taken possession of our standing-

ground, and we shall now proceed at our leisure to move the world.

1. *My first proposition is that for the purpose of this discussion we may confine ourselves to consideration of scope and method.*

Nobody is more thoroughly aware than I that for the spirit's daily food mighty little sunshine can be abstracted directly from the methodological cucumber. Methodology is merely the algebra of knowledge. On the other hand, knowledge cannot grow from scrap perceptions to coherent generalizations without valid mental method. As knowledge advances from the accretions of casual experience to the accumulations of planned research, incessant criticism of method is indispensable. When we are at the stage of deliberate investigation, the methodologist must run the lines of preliminary survey, and he must account for the inaccuracies and the discrepancies in first results. Progress in science depends on development of method not less than on multiplication of data. No one whose judgment has weight can lightly esteem any evident tendency among investigators toward consensus about delimitation of problems and competence of methods. The methodologist is not the sociologist *par excellence*, but the sociologists are far enough advanced to have recognized the necessity of constant vigilance in criticizing their own methodology.

2. *In the second place, "agreement," in this discussion, is a relative term.*

Fortunately we are not so contentedly agreed about anything that there is likely to be an arrest of progress among us in the near future from lack of sparks to keep our motors moving. What I refer to as "agreement" in a given case might perhaps be more accurately phrased as "inclination to emphasize," as contrasted with utter absence of settled usage one or two decades ago. If any of us, for example, employ biological metaphors for sociological relations, we all understand that they are metaphors, even if we have no precise common denominator for expressing the facts literally. Again, if we differ widely in our terminology, it is increasingly evident that these variations stand

for convergent efforts to formulate one and the same thing. The margin of difference between us represents in part our search for slightly different types of relations when we appear to be after the same things; in part our failure quite to make out the exact relations that we are running down; and in part mere conflicts of judgment about the systems of notation to be used in recording what has been ascertained.

3. *We agree to discriminate between the axis of sociology and the center of interest chosen by any individual sociologist.*

A dozen years ago the dispassionate observer would have had the general appearance of things rather uniformly on his side if he had said that each sociologist thinks the head of the table is where he sits, and that unadulterated sociological food is served only from his porringer. At peril of further snarling this tangle of tropes, I may say that the sociologists are today employed in many divisions of labor, but we are rapidly outgrowing the foible of considering our division either the sole measure of sociological value or the Greenwich meridian for all the rest. Our conception of the scope of sociological problems excludes the presumption that a single investigator, or a single group or type of investigators, can control all the conditions that enter into the problems. Our work will be abortive unless in spirit and in effect it is co-operative. Each of us is not only better able than a few years ago to see that his own contribution to the final result can be but a fragment at best, but each of us feels an intelligent respect for the importance of his neighbor's work. Sociology is no longer to our minds merely, or even principally, the particular phase of theory or practice which chiefly engages our individual attention. It is the correlated system of positive inquiry into human relations in which every variation of approach to real knowledge of social experience will ultimately find its place.

4. *We agree to differentiate sociology from antecedent psychology or cosmology or metaphysics.*

For purely conceptual purposes sociology is one thing—viz., the inclusive and co-ordinated system of knowledge referred to in the last sentence of 3; for practical working purposes it is

an assemblage of very different things. In the former aspect sociology is a much-to-be-desired organon of all the discoveries and all the indications about social relations which are presumably within the reach of all the actual and hereafter-to-be-differentiated sciences that relate to society. It is "the far-off divine event" at the terminus of the human pursuit of self-knowledge. With this primarily schematic organization of knowledge, into which the positive social sciences are slowly putting a content, the more general questions of methodology must be concerned. We need not here discuss any of them in detail.

Sociology as an actual investigation of concrete relations in society, on the other hand, is some sort of dealing with the phenomena of cause and effect in associations of two or more human persons. Now all the phenomena of association between persons are conditioned both by the qualities of the individuals associating, and by the underlying mundane and cosmic order which sets the stage for the human drama. It is almost axiomatic, therefore, that reflection upon the most familiar forms of societary relationships may at any moment press men of philosophic bent back toward antecedent problems of psychology, or cosmology, or metaphysics. It has not seldom happened that men have proposed sociological problems, or have started from some sociological preconception, but have ended by doing the bulk of their work upon problems which were not directly sociological in the second or narrower sense. They were pre- or sub- or super- or supra- or circum-sociological. Yet they have not unlikely urged their claim to be rated as pre-eminently sociological. In the former of the two senses they may have been. At a given moment a contribution to psychology, or to physical science, or to metaphysics may do more toward constructing the ultimate system of knowledge about society than any contemporary contribution by investigators of strictly social relations. The person who makes the former contribution, however, is no more a sociologist in the second sense than the stonemason who lays the foundation of a house is the wood-worker who helps to finish it. We are getting away from the supposed

necessity of appropriating to our particular occupation every title that carries credit. We realize that questions of rank and dignity are not at issue. We are distinguishing between types of work upon types or phases or sections of problems, and we are more willing to call them by their appropriate names. The more sociological we are in spirit, the more scrupulous we are to be sure, and to make others sure, that in practice we are aware when our operations are primarily within one division of research or another. We are thus becoming more amenable to the specific logical and methodological discipline requisite for the validity of our processes in our actual scope of investigation. This means much in the way of graduation out of amateurishness, not to say quackery, and advance toward responsible scientific procedure.

5. *We agree that the primary task of sociology is to discover and to formulate the laws of those processes in human association which differ, either in degree or in kind, from processes that occur in antecedent orders in the scale of evolution.*

So long as the Aristotelian static interpretation of the universe was the major premise in human thinking, we did not question that we were on the track of reality when, in trying to classify knowledge, we added another to the always futile attempts to mark off the boundaries of the sciences geometrically, like the squares of a chess-board. The majority of the small fraction of the human race who think at all are still fondly sure that one segment of the sphere of knowledge is the preordained preserve of geology, another of biology, another of history, and so on. The few people who are beginning to make out the meaning of the perception that all reality is the interplay of all the forces which multiply causes and effects in the universe, are rapidly discovering the foolishness of the time-honored attempts at schematic classifications of the sciences. We see that those attempts were like children's building of alphabet blocks into houses. The blocks are not real building materials, and the houses are not real houses. Except in so far as we are referring to mere collections of material, data, evidence, demarkation of sciences is not a problem of areas of substances, but of relations

of forces. The problems of every science are problems of the action of all the forces that are organized into the phenomena which present the problems. A given problem encountered by the chemist, for example, may prove to be equally a problem for the physicist, and the geologist, and the astronomer. That is, it is a question of what forces are at work, in what proportions each is employed, and in what manner they join in resultant action. So of the psychical sciences.

Accordingly, we have a perfectly intelligible index of the distinction between sociological and ante-sociological problems, not in a monopoly of a certain superficial area of material, but in reserve of distinctive types of problems. The questions for investigation which we group for convenience under such titles, for example, as physics, and chemistry, and physiology, and psychology, are not separated from the unanswered questions of sociology by the fact that the forces and the reactions considered by the former are absent from the situations studied by the latter. The difference is that each of the ante-sociological sciences attempts to generalize the actions of particular types of forces, each in its turn making whatever allowance is necessary for the conditioning action of the other types of forces. In the same way sociology, using the term now in the second of the two senses explained in 4, attempts to generalize the action of forces peculiar to human association, all the while carefully calculating the allowance which has to be made for the specific action of forces which it is the task of ante-sociological sciences to investigate.

For example, the problems of heredity belong primarily to biology, not to sociology. Before the biologist learns all about heredity, however, he will have checked up all the types of phenomena in the life-history of the different orders, from the humblest infusoria to Europe's proudest royal families. The biologist does not thereby become a sociologist, because his search is not for social phenomena as such, but for phenomena of heredity, in whatever orders of life they appear. On the other hand, the sociologist may be studying, for instance, the tendencies in the birth-rate of a selected civilized nation. A

primary problem is the extent to which the phenomena are physiological on the one hand, and psychical or moral on the other. The hereditary factors involved are elements in the sociological calculation just so far as they affect the birth-rate. Possibly it becomes necessary for the sociologist to undertake a study of the physical relation of the ancestors of the given population to the fecundity of the present generation. That would, of course, be a special problem in heredity. If scientific investigation went on according to a strictly logical plan, the sociologist would start upon such a problem only under conditions like those which would send the artillery corps of an army scurrying over the country after forage—viz., when the commissary department had failed to do its part. When the sociologist studies the relation of sexual abnormality in ancestors to the fertility of offspring, it is not because the problems of heredity fall within his proper scope, nor because he is interested in problems of heredity as such. It is because he is interested in heredity *in so far as it conditions social relations*, or at most in variations which are peculiar to human societies.

We may add an illustration showing the same distinction between problems of psychology and sociology. I will not try to tell just where psychological problems end and where sociological problems begin, because the chances are that I should fail. In the rough, however, psychology attempts to generalize the phenomena of consciousness—i. e., stimulation, attention, the formation of images, valuation, volition, etc. The primary problems of psychology refer to the relations of stimuli and modes of consciousness to each other, abstracted from all further significance of the external stimuli which may start the consciousness process, or of the subsequent effects of consciousness processes. Returning to the problem of the birth-rate, for example, the sociologist encounters phenomena of consciousness in the facts of human propagation, and perhaps he demonstrates that in a given case these are relatively more decisive of the birth-rate than hereditary factors. His concern with these consciousness factors, however, is not as variations of the phenomena of consciousness, but as factors of social influence. He may have to

analyze them beyond the point at which the psychologists have left them, or he may not. In the former case it is another analogy with the foraging expedition. It is merely incidental to the proper pursuit of the sociological interest—viz., the specific reactions in consciousness which are due to the presence and activity of our fellows. When he is clearly in his own specialty, instead of making requisitions upon researches that bear the psychologists' brand, the sociologist is after exact knowledge of combinations of which activities of consciousness are factors, but he deals with them distinctively in the forms in which they appear in the composite units, human persons. He inquires into the activities of persons in the direction of reciprocal influence upon each other, rather than in the direction of analysis of the subjective process through which those objective combinations are mediated. For instance, he asks how individuals influence and are influenced by customs, traditions, social standards, authorities, conventions, rivalries, alliances, etc. As a sociologist, he takes for granted the cycles of activity in consciousness through which these influences are exerted.

6. *If 5 does not seem to correspond with the activities of some sociologists, it is because we do not find the laws of antecedent phenomena worked out minutely enough to be taken over bodily into sociology from other sciences, and we plunge into preliminary work, instead of dealing with sociology proper.*

This proposition is merely a restatement of the situation illustrated in 5 by excursions of sociologists into biology and psychology. Relatively little has been done from the sociological point of view upon the specifically societary action of forces which emerge much lower down in the evolutionary order. The hiatus in part accounts for the amount of work labeled sociology which has been attempted by sociologists merely because they see that it is essential to sociological investigation, but that it has been overlooked by the people whose proper work includes the class of problems to which it belongs.

7. *We may acknowledge disagreement upon a fundamental conception and corresponding methods; viz., starting with some variation of the formula, "Sociology is the science of society,"*

we differ on the question whether society has been produced chiefly by the same forces that have produced the flora and fauna of the earth, or chiefly by forces by virtue of which society is something essentially different from flora and fauna.

Accordingly we tend to make our "science of society," on the one hand, a more generalized botany and zoölogy, or, on the other hand, a mere generalized psychology. We might express the one extreme by pressing into use a word in its technical economic sense, and saying that society is wholly a product of "land." We might represent the other extreme by asserting that society is wholly the product of mind. As I shall show more fully in a moment, this divergence is not properly a schism in our sociology, but rather a reflection of our inherited prejudices in cosmic philosophy and in methodology.

8. *We are agreed that it is hypercritical to raise questions of metaphysical dualism or monism in connection with the difference in 7.*

The prejudices which we inherit or imitate may once have had actually dualistic or monistic connotations in a sense which sociologists today feel themselves at perfect liberty to waive. Our concern is with forces which our present state of knowledge most conveniently groups as "physical" and "psychical." We are not bound to venture any ontological assumptions about the ultimate nature of those forces. So far as they demonstrate themselves in social reactions, they are qualitatively unlike enough to be treated as quite irreducible factors. In frankly accepting them accordingly, and in analyzing their operations so far as they appear above the line of our horizon, we are acting strictly in accordance with the proprieties of our division of labor. It is not our business to push analysis back into metaphysics.

9. *Even the difference in 7 is converging toward agreement.*

Recognizing both physical and mental factors in every stage of the evolution of human association, our sociological methods are tending toward fixity in one of three ground forms; viz., first, an attempt to reduce the phenomena of human association to terms of physical factors; second, abstraction of those types

of association in which the determining factors are psychic, and concentration of attention upon the contents and variations of associations as purely psychic situations; third, a calculus of the ratio of the physical and the psychical in the various types of association.

It requires no gift of second sight to foresee that these three methods must eventually become one. I take slight risks of wandering far beyond the confines of our agreements when I speak for a moment of their near future.

10. *Our mental limitations being what they are, frank recognition of these three tendencies, and open avowal of allegiance to one or other of them, is more and more probable and desirable.*

Very few men are likely to be equally capable of the highest efficiency in physical and psychical research. Most of us must choose between being experts in one and laymen in the other, or without our choice we shall rate as dabblers in both. Some men may be able to do very little first-hand investigation either of physical or of psychical elements, yet they may do good work in verifying estimates of the proportions of those elements in typical situations. Provided men of these types are working within hailing distance of one another, and are keeping tab on one another's performances, it is in the interest of the economy of effort that each type shall work upon its specific clue to the limit. Let the men who believe that language, and art, and science, and politics, and love, and religion, are merely the finished products of the same forces which have reached an equilibrium in the forms of matter that are apparent to our senses—let them work away upon their hypothesis, until all the evidence within reach is brought to the support of their theorem. Let the men who believe that mind rather than matter determines the phenomena peculiar to human society—let them also summon the evidence and display it for all it is worth. Let the men who are attorneys neither for physics nor for psychics continue to hold the balance between the opposing claims, and to find a place in the reckoning for each new factor, or power of a factor, which either of the other types has overlooked or underrated. Instead of causing schism among us, that definite grouping and

method will turn out to be in the interest of ultimate agreement. We shall not only live more comfortably together when we learn to bid godspeed to one another in following out these contrasted schemes, but we shall be in the way of accelerated motion toward concentration of these tentative conceptions into a unity.

11. *Speaking for the moment as an adherent of the second tendency, in contrast with the first, I would say that, so far as our type of sociologists has become self-conscious, we are agreed that nothing is social which is not psychical.*

Climate, topography, soil, have the same relation to human association that the temperature of a hall has to the rendering of a symphony. Temperature is not music; it does not cause music; it is not transmutable into music; it cannot express the essence of music. It is a condition in varying degrees favorable or unfavorable to the production of music. The psychological sociologists are virtually agreed that physics, in the widest sense of the term, has no more intimate connection with sociology than thermodynamics has with thoroughbass and counterpoint.

12. *Speaking still for the second, or sociological, type of method, I would further define our agreement about our particular problems by saying that they are all primarily inquiries into the reactions of associates upon each other.*

Indulging my own preference among psychological terms, I would resolve every sentient act into the three essential elements: attention, valuation, and volition. Given a hypothetical non-socius, with foothold on the earth, but with no contacts with other individuals of his kind, sentient action on the part of such solitary individual is conceivable under stimulus of physical need. Attention, valuation, and volition might co-operate in a rudimentary way in the process of adjusting conduct to the physical conditions, in utter absence of spiritual environment. Whether such hypothesis has any uses in psychology, it is obviously *obiter dictum* for sociology. In our division of labor the individual, whether real or hypothetical, is supposed to be taken for granted, and our special type of work is with individuals involved in the processes of action and reaction upon one another.

In particular the primary sociological question may be resolved

into these details: What are the variations, and the laws of variation, of the reactions exerted upon associates by their discordant and concerted attention, their discordant and concerted valuations, and their discordant and concerted volitions? These are the stuff out of which all social phenomena are composed. We are agreed that social situations are permutations of the ways in which given collections of associates attend to the same things, or different things, value the same things or different things, and will the same things or different things. We are agreed that social processes are variations of the ways in which the attention, valuation, and volition of members of groups are modified in direction and in kind by the direction and kind of attention, valuation, and volition exercised by other members of the group.

13. *We are agreed that sociology itself is a sentient act, with each of the factors of sentiency raised to the n th power.*

Speaking literally, the scope of sociology includes divisions analogous with the cardinal phases of a sentient act in the consciousness of an individual; i.e., sociological consciousness is in part knowing what is or has been in typical human associations; it is concurrently evaluating what is or has been with reference to what we know about the evolving interests of persons; it is all in all willing so as to realize the things ascertained to be worth while.

We are consequently agreed in hoping that modern activity psychology may magnify its office by clarifying our perception that this tripartite composition is involved in complete science, just as it is involved in the simplest complete sentient act. As the individual act is either a resultant of knowing, feeling, and willing, or it is neither knowing, feeling, nor willing—that is, it is not a proper sentient act at all; so professed knowledge or norm or choice is an empty algebraic form of mental gesture unless it is validated by functioning at one and the same time as knowing and valuing and willing.

This does not signify that in our formal organizations of sociology we must develop arbitrarily bounded divisions of sociological knowledge (science?), sociological valuations (ethics?), and sociological technique (constructive programmes). Whether

this shall occur or not is a detail, and it will be settled by experience. This essential perception is that real knowledge of human association is complete only when it expresses itself as a whole with these constituent phases. The closer the sociologists keep to reality, the more certainly will sociology develop as an activity of the three dimensions—cognitive, ethical, and constructive.

14. *The attempt, under propositions 11, 12, and 13, to speak solely for the psychological method illustrates the impossibility of keeping within the limits of reality if we assume a realm in which psychical influences are insulated from physical factors.*

At best, or worst, our efforts to claim everything for psychics concede something to physics. To that extent they advertise our gravitation toward agreement upon the third, which we may call the synthetic method. This proposition harks back to the view indicated in 4.

15. *We are agreed that the structural or static phase of social occurrences is a sort of mirage.*

That is, our mental limitations force us to take refuge in provisional static representations of social occurrences, but the reality which we partially apprehend under these static forms is a tension of forces constantly rearranging the relations of the associates who compose the situation. The relatively permanent elements in association are not the structural phases but the dynamic factors. Analysis of societary forms is therefore a relatively superficial phase of sociology: analysis of societary forces is the ultimate process of pure sociology.

16. *We are agreed that it is no longer profitable to discuss the question whether this, that, or the other is "sociology."*

The profitable methodological question deals not with definition, nor with form, but with effect. Is a given inquiry of any use toward enlarging and informing our social consciousness? If it is, it is bound to find its place in the sociological encyclopaedia in proportion to the kind and degree of its service in correcting or co-ordinating our social knowing, and valuing, and willing.

17. *We are agreed that it is no longer profitable to attempt*

to assign divisions of labor in sociology by a priori distribution of functions.

Most of the work that we shall do for a long time to come is likely to be in effect qualitative rather than quantitative. We shall be getting problems into shape for our successors to work on. We shall be discovering how one sort of problem depends upon another. We shall be working out an algebra of the social forces, and meanwhile learning a little about relations of less and more in concrete social cause and effect. Meanwhile, we are likely to look with decreasing favor on analogues of the trade-union policy of forbidding a spare carpenter to help unload material, because that is the teamster's job, or a spare plumber to lend a hand in lifting a step-ladder, because that is the plasterer's job. If our inquiry, for example, starts with social technology, and takes us back and forth from social description and interpretation to the application that we are trying to invent, there will be fewer sociological walking delegates to bar our way. On the other hand, we are entering on a period in which sane science is likely to be promoted best by men who will incidentally point the ways in which valid knowledge and feeling and willing about social relations are dependent upon one another. That is, to repeat the conclusion of 13, we are agreed that social science, of whatever name, is abortive as knowledge, unless it is making toward the common goal of apprehending the meaning of human experience for our threefold activity of cognition, valuation, and volition.

18. *We are agreed that, whatever our particular part in the process of accumulating social knowledge, our perception of the oneness of social knowledge, and of the futility of all pseudo-science which is unaware of this oneness, delegates to us a distinctive office among students of societary phenomena.*

Irrespective of our special divisions of labor, we are united in the purpose of showing that all divisions of labor in the social sciences are intelligent in the degree in which they are conscious of their subordination to the inclusive labor of discovering the whole meaning of human experience. We are essentially prophets of scientific synthesis, however special may be the province

in which we are carrying on our particular sort of analysis, or however concrete may be our attempts to apply sociological knowledge to practice.

19. *We are agreed that our distinctive center of attention and our principle of synthesis is personality.*

This proposition marks the strategic point in our campaign for recognition of the sociological point of view. We have made far too little of the difference in this respect between the outlook of the sociologists and that of men who approach society relations from other points of departure.

Our attempt is to promote knowledge of human experience in terms of the make-up of the persons who enact the experience. We are trying to interpret what was, and is, and is to be in human association, both as phases and functions of the simple forms of personality in the individual units and as phases and functions of the composite personality in associations.

Whether we are aware of it or not, this is a radical differentiating principle between the essentially sociological and the non-sociological. The whole difference between atomism and co-ordination depends on whether we assume evolving individual and associated persons as our center of interpretation, or take selected institutions or products of persons as the center. In the former case, every occurrence finds its meaning, whether as cause or as effect, only as it is referred to its functional place in the process of evolving types of individuals and of associations. In the latter case, each institution, domestic, ceremonial, political, ecclesiastical, professional, industrial (to adopt Spencer's familiar rubrics for convenience), is by the method of procedure promoted in turn to the rank of center of attention. This rank is conferred not by the abject necessity of a serial order in the exercise of attention. It is conferred by mobilizing a principle of dissociation of ideas, instead of transferring attention from one class of objects to another while anchored to a common center of correlation.

When, for example, we project a "science of wealth" or a "science of government," we take a step in the direction of scientific anarchy. If followed up by as many steps in the same

direction as have been the rule rather than the exception, the procedure becomes, not only in principle, but in effect, scientific anarchy. That is, it does not merely propose to isolate a function or a product of human activities from the whole scheme of activities *for temporary examination as an incident of those activities*. It rather selects that particular function or product—say government, or wealth—and arbitrarily imputes to it, for “scientific” purposes, the character and value of *an end unto itself*. The essential question of such a presumptive science thereupon becomes: “What is the meaning and value of anything and everything, persons included, as determined by their relations to the status or development of this posited end, government, wealth, religion, morality, etc., etc.?”

Even if a “science” so abstracted is understood at the beginning to be centered at last not in itself, but in a containing scheme of things, as the science of wealth evidently was in Adam Smith’s mind for instance, it nevertheless accepts an almost impossible handicap at the outset. It starts off with the working assumption that the actual scheme of things may with impunity be treated as though it were what it is not—viz., a disjunction of an indefinite number of ends unto themselves. The longer that lead is followed, the more certainly will it tend to splinter knowledge into a litter of unintelligible fragments.

This is precisely the condition in the social sciences which it is the central function of the sociologists to correct. The question, “What is the meaning and value of anything and everything for any abstractable phase or product of life whatsoever?” is never scientifically legitimate, except in so far as it is held instantly subordinate and answerable to the one central question, “What is the meaning and value of anything and everything as determined by its relations to the evolution of persons?” Personality is the final normative principle within the range of our knowledge. Any science is falsely so called in the degree in which it feels licensed to suspend that norm of correlation, and to act as though there were alternative principles of interpretation.

20. *We are agreed that, whatever degree of emphasis the*

inadequacy of our knowledge requires us to put on the cognitive or the evaluating phases of the sociological process, these phases must always rank in the last analysis as provisional and tributary, while we must regard the volitional, constructive phase as ultimate.

From one point of view the tasks of life may be divided into four groups: We have, first, to make the earth yield its increase in the largest abundance, or, more generally expressed, to get control of physical material and forces. We have, second, to remake and reapply these natural resources so that they will serve the largest number and widest range of human purposes. We have, third, to distribute the benefits of these natural and acquired resources in such a way that the permanent interests of society will be most equitably conserved. We have, fourth, to apply these distributed resources in such a way that they will do most toward realizing the spiritual possibilities of human beings and toward developing higher types of human association. As we have come to the conclusion that the dynamic phases of life are the final terms for our intelligence, it follows that we must regard all phases of ability or knowledge as relatively tentative until they have yielded their meaning for this fourth and final division of human interest.

DISCUSSION

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The sociologists ought to be under obligation to Professor Small for what he has done in his *General Sociology* in analyzing the work of sociologists to find what is held in common by them. Whether we agree with him or not that there is a large body of truths held in common by sociologists, his method and work are the most hopeful promise that sociologists may soon come to a realization of their agreements rather than their differences.

Sociology cannot be said to have made much progress so long as the writers of general treatises on the subject feel compelled to fill a fair portion of their works with the discussion of such topics as definitions of sociology, method of sociology, scope of sociology, purpose of sociology, social laws and units of investigation, to say nothing of the fruitless attempt to solve the riddle: "Is sociology a science?" The appearance of these topics in the foreground is the surest evidence of the unsettled state of sociological investigation. Until writers on the subject can make certain assumptions as to point of view of sociologists and the general nature of social phenomena, and proceed without a preliminary

digression to an analysis and discussion of the data, sociology will not make much headway. On this account, treatises like the one referred to and discussions like the present are of paramount importance.

The principles laid down by Professor Small in the paper are so numerous that it will be impossible to discuss at length many of them.

The differences between sociologists are frequently due to differences in centers of interest, as Professor Small intimates. The bias of the individual investigator, whether biological, psychological, or economic, is responsible for the chief differences in view and in method. As sociology is a new science, most of the contributors to it have come from some other department of learning. If the investigator is a biologist, he is somewhat inclined to apply to sociology the laws deduced "from processes that occur in antecedent orders in the scale of evolution." If the writer is a psychologist, he is apt to emphasize psychical phenomena as the cause of group-relationships. If the investigator is an economist, he is quite likely to find in the physical environment, in "land," to use Professor Small's terminology, the chief causes of social organization and progress. The scientific bias in approaching the subject which it seems almost impossible to avoid, is chiefly responsible for the failure to agree on fundamentals.

I agree fully with the writer of the paper in what he says of the need for properly appraising the physical and psychical causes in social study. I cannot agree with him, however, in his contention that the interests of science will be best served, and that "the two groups will live together more harmoniously," if those representing each of the contrasted views would work out their theories of social forces and causes to the exclusion of the views held by those in the opposing camp. This is what sociologists have been doing, and this is why there is lack of harmony between them.

No matter what his preferences are, the sociologist should admit the existence of the two forces and attempt to assign to each its proper rôle as a social cause. Professor Small himself, then speaking avowedly as an adherent of the psychical causes, says that "climate, topography, soil, have the same relation to human association that the temperature of a hall has to the rendering of a symphony." It seems to me that this conclusion is one of the best evidences of the short-comings of a method which follows out one class of causes exclusively to its own logical consequences; and, moreover, this point of view does not contribute very much to the harmony of the two groups, which is assumed to be desirable. Climate, topography, and soil have very much to do, fundamentally, with human association. If we will take an extreme situation, such as the life of the Kentucky mountaineer, it must be admitted, I think, that the three forces named are very largely the determining factors in the association, life, and character of these people. This is said without wishing to be open to the charge of assigning too much importance to the physical as against the psychical causes in human association. Admitting the rôle of the two classes of causes in determining social phenomena, the attempt to interpret those phenomena by one class of causes will lead to conclusions which are unsound.

"Analysis of societary forms is, therefore, a relatively superficial phase of sociology. Analysis of societary forces is the ultimate process of pure sociology." The acceptance of these conclusions, stated in the paper, means much

for the advancement of sociology. A description of social structure is valuable, but it is not the ultimate thing in sociology. But what is to be our method? How are we going to appreciate societary forces and get at the ultimate causes?

I agree with the writer of the paper "that our distinctive center of attention is personality;" that "our attempt is to promote knowledge of human experience in terms of the make-up of the persons who enact the experience." We have been interpreting and reasoning too much in sociology at long range. We have been applying principles and laws deduced from other fields to human association without verifying them. We have neglected to study the associating person, to learn about his impulses, his wants, and the forces that control him. If sociology is to be put on a plane with other sciences, we must find its phenomena in human association, and we must study these phenomena at first hand. The student of sociology should have training in biology, psychology, economic geography, and history, in order that his view-point may be broadened for social interpretation. In the university with which I am connected our students are urged to take courses in biology, psychology, economic geography, and history, and we recommend especially that they do work in settlements, and, if possible, reside in a settlement. Work in a settlement, or in any capacity which brings the student intimately in contact with the life of people outside of his own group, is the most valuable training for the sociologist. It must be admitted that most of us who are now teaching sociology have been inadequately trained for our work. Hope for agreement lies with the sociologists of the future. When our students appear who have the capacity to know and understand people, who are trained to be sociologists, we shall have some promise of agreement among sociologists.

Professor Ross has said somewhere that what sociology needs is body and content, and that we should go to history and ethnology for material. I am in full agreement with him on this point, but unfortunately, history has not been written in such a way as to be of much value to the sociologist. The neglected factors of history are needed most by the sociologist. For some time the sociologist will need to do a great deal of descriptive work. We should have a social history of the various commonwealths written by men trained in sociology.

Until work of this kind is done, and until more detailed work is done in studying social groups of various kinds, the sociologist is not likely to make much headway. When this work is done, sociologists will have much less reason to quarrel with each other because of a lack of real subject-matter; they will be in a better position then to explain the laws of human association and to interpret social progress.

PROFESSOR J. Q. DEALEY, BROWN UNIVERSITY

The excellent paper of Dr. Small's, with its statement of numerous points of probable agreement among sociologists, shows one resemblance at least between sociology and theology. Writers in either branch, when they emphasize their differences, seem very far apart, but are in close harmony when agreements are emphasized. This is especially true when by "agreement" is meant "inclination to emphasize." Probably most who have followed the development of

sociological thought in recent years would go almost to the full length with Dr. Small in his statement of agreements.

We have passed through the biological stage and now have grave doubts in regard to organic analogies. We are all members of the psychological school of sociology, but place greater or less emphasis on physical or economic factors as conditioning the development and activity of mental factors. There is perhaps a proper distinction between the static and the dynamic in sociology worth emphasizing; yet, after all, the dynamic processes and societary forces are increasingly attracting attention. Dr. Small rightly emphasized the unity of all social knowledge. The special social sciences are too often treated as discrete studies, and their unity is neglected. I for one am in hearty sympathy with the speaker in his assertion that ultimately the volitional constructive phase of sociology will prove worthy of the fundamental emphasis. The constructive aspect of sociology is appealing to human minds like a new gospel. After all, whether we dream, with the utopians, of a coming perfection, or, with Spencer, grind it out slowly at the mills of the gods, we look forward to the time when human personality, developed through wisdom, forethought, and volitional energy, may expedite the natural processes of evolution, and bring about a social organization dominated by ideas of justice and fraternity.

Brown University has now had a sociological department for sixteen years. About three thousand different students have taken one or more courses during that time. At first we taught concrete studies, such as charity and crime, and then took up principles and theory. For the past ten years we have reversed this process, and are well satisfied with the results. Every year we put about 175 sophomores through a course in the principles of sociology; after that they may elect concrete studies. We do not desire to turn out "social reformers" so much, as men familiar with the broader principles of social development. Fix the principle in the mind, and the application of it will follow.

PROFESSOR E. C. HAYES, MIAMI UNIVERSITY

Of all the features in Professor Small's paper which are provocative of thought I select for discussion that which he mentions, not as a "point of concurrence," but of divergence, among sociologists; for it presents a problem. I refer to the question he raises concerning the place in sociology of physical and psychic phenomena respectively.

It seems probable that a large part of the divergence and uncertainty concerning the scope of sociology has been due to a reluctance to treat the problems of human life and activity by strictly scientific methods. The splendid promise of sociology rests largely on the fact that we are at last getting ready to apply to the problems of human life methods of investigation like those which have long proved their fruitfulness in the explanation of physical phenomena. The *a priori*, philosophic method, by which it has been customary to treat the problems of man's life and conduct, consisted in pondering hard questions until there were evolved in the thinker's mind answers that harmonized with each other, with such information as he chanced to have, with his disposition and prejudices, and with the practical interests which he regarded. The scientific

method consists, not in closing the eyes to ponder, but in opening the eyes to look! And the first essential question in coming to agreement as to the scope of a science is: What is it out there at which we should all be looking?

When sociologists attempt to answer this question, their formulas differ exceedingly. But it may not be too much to say that, when they have made valued and accepted contributions to sociological knowledge, it is because they have been studying *prevalent modes of activity* that go on among men. These activities, I think, are the phenomena at which sociologists must look. Human activities include all the believing and desiring, the suffering and enjoying, the struggle and striving, which together make up the content of the life of men and of civilizations—a psychic world with its problems of the evolution and of the continuous conditioning of its phenomena. The descriptions of sociology must become analytic; not like a traveler's description of landscapes, but like a scientist's report of a collecting expedition, where each flower-clad hillside has been seen as an assemblage of identifiable varieties of plants, and each plant as one of a species. The complex activities of peoples and epochs are composed of numerous simple modes of activity, repeated by many individuals; no activity of one individual is *exactly* repeated by another, but the differences between individual activities of the same mode may be compared with the differences between individual plants of the same species. The life of a person considered as a whole is complex and unique, but the simple modes of activity are repeated in the lives of thousands within the group, and usually also of other thousands in other groups. The prevalent modes of activity weave and interweave, and together constitute the vast streaming of *the social process*.

Professor Small suggested a necessary step toward the agreement sought when he said that sociology has nothing to do with any metaphysical concepts that may be thought to underlie social phenomena. Sociology has to do only with phenomena and with relations among phenomena. Activities are psychic phenomena, and as truly phenomena as material things. The difference between physical and psychic phenomena that is of significance for sociology lies mainly in the way we know them—my own activity arises in my own consciousness, but I cannot be *conscious* of a hitching-post, I can only become *aware* of it, through intervention of the senses. Every activity included in the social process goes on in the consciousness of some individual. But the fragment of the whole process which goes on in the consciousness of any *one* individual is infinitesimal, so that the social process as a whole is as objective to any single observer, as mountain, rivers, seas, and prairies are; and becomes accessible to observation only as it is disclosed by the bodies and material works of men, which may be called the *socio-physical* phenomena. If all this be true, then the task of sociology is to identify, describe, and explain the prevalent modes of human activity, as they are disclosed by the socio-physical phenomena.

In order to secure agreement as to the scope of a science, it is first necessary to agree as to what phenomena the science is to describe and explain, but it is no less necessary to agree as to what is meant by explanation.

I share in the high hopes that have been expressed concerning the prospective usefulness of sociology, but it seems to me that the service of a science

must consist in the intellectual comprehension which it affords. It is only by explaining how things are caused that we acquire ability to cause anything desirable; by such enlightenment we are enabled to discern the courses of action that lead to good and those that lead to evil, and are supplied with motives to pursue the one and shun the other.

I wish to protest against the idea that we can explain social phenomena by referring them to various "social forces." The habit, almost universal among sociologists, of referring frequently to "social forces" I believe is a bad one that ought to be broken. The phrase is often equivalent to "motives;" but referring activity to a motive does not constitute a sociological explanation; whether by that word is meant an idea, a desire, or a compound of both, a prevalent motive is itself a social phenomenon to be explained. When it does not mean motive, the phrase "social force" may refer to a class of social activities or a form of conditioning relations, as in the expressions "force of custom" and "force of imitation;" or to congenital properties of human nature. The temptation to use it lies in its metaphysical quality of drugging the mind's hunger for explanation with a false satisfaction by yielding the complaisance of understanding without the labor of obstinate analysis. Sociology, I believe, has nothing to do with any "social force" any more than biology has to do with a "vital force."

Explanation of the phenomenon x (in the case of sociology a prevalent mode of activity) consists in showing the phenomenon x in its relations to the conditioning phenomena a, b, c , etc., in the presence of which x emerges, by the increase of which x increases, and by the diminution of which x diminishes. Of course, this expression is schematic, as for brevity it must be here; there are counteracting as well as promoting conditions, and other changes in phenomena than changes in mere prevalence; and *types of change* in human activities are susceptible of similar explanation, and their explanation is implied in the explanation of prevalent modes of activity. It is only prevalent (or recurrent) phenomena the explanation of which can be stated in the form of a law; and a scientific law is—is it not?—*a statement of the regular relation between recurrent phenomena and the conditions in the presence of which they emerge*. Sociological explanation can relate prevalent modes of activity to the conditions by virtue of which they become prevalent at one place and time and not at another, with the increase of which, in passing to another place or time, they increase in prevalence, and with the diminution of which they diminish in prevalence.

In order to agree as to the scope of a science, it is necessary to specify what the science is to describe and explain, and what is meant by explanation; and also—if there is to be a science at all—it is necessary to agree that the phenomena to be studied are capable of explanation—that is, that they are caused. The prevalence at any given time or place of any given activity—good, bad, or indifferent—is as truly caused as any other natural phenomenon; that is, it is conditioned by other related phenomena. We may never be able to predict which individual will become a drunkard, but we can tell that with variation in certain conditions of climate, diet, domicile, employment, social approvals and

beliefs, the prevalence of drunkenness will vary. We may not be able to predict which *individuals* will act in a certain way, any more than the actuary can predict which man out of a thousand will die within five years, though he does know that the average death-rate for five years will fall within certain limits; or any more than the student of physiology and hygiene can predict which individual in a neighborhood will die of typhoid fever, although he does know that the prevalence of typhoid fever in that neighborhood is due to certain conditions, and that the abatement of such conditions would diminish its prevalence or stamp it out entirely. The importance, both practical and scientific, of similar knowledge with reference to social phenomena is not to be disparaged.

In accounting for the prevalence of different modes of social activity, physical and psychic conditions are *alike* to be considered. Indeed, one who seeks for the explanation of social phenomena must be on the watch for conditioning phenomena of four classes: first, climate, natural resources, etc.—in a word, *geographic* conditions; second, domiciles, railroads, other accumulations of capital, in general, the material products of man's work—in one word, *technic* conditions; third, physical health and strength, temperaments and capacities, whatever can be passed on by biological heredity, including predispositions of nerve and brain for thought and action, sometimes referred to as the "social force," but all of which together may better be named *biologic* conditions, hereditary and acquired; fourth, the other activities in the presence of which the activity to be explained goes on—that is, the *psychic* conditions.

Would not an adequate basis for a working agreement among sociologists be afforded by concurrence as to these three points? First, the phenomena studied by sociology are explicable; that is, a sociological phenomenon—as really as any—is conditioned by other phenomena; second, to enable us to see the sociological phenomena in their relations to the conditioning phenomena is to afford the explanation sought; and third, the phenomena to be identified, described, and explained are the prevalent modes of human activity, which make up the social process. As to the place in sociology of physical and psychic phenomena—the prevalent modes of activity included in the social process, all go on in the consciousness of man, that is, they are psychic phenomena; but they become accessible to observation as disclosed by the bodies and material works of men, which are the socio-physical phenomena; and in the explanation of the psychic phenomena thus disclosed it is necessary to regard alike conditioning phenomena which are physical and others which are psychic—namely the geographic, technic, physiologic, and psychic conditions.